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DOWNS-STREAM.

It is late autumn, and all London is out of town save myself. I am detained in that hateful brick-kiln, while my friends and acquaintances are upon the breezy moors, or climbing snowy mountain-tops, or lying listless by the calm cool seas. I shall have no autumn holiday this year; nothing remains for me but iced beverages, and the memory of vanished pleasure-trips. Let me recall one of these latter, and set it down; for while I do so, a panorama of exquisite landscape pictures passes through my brain, and, for the time, obscures the desolate dusty road, the white and blinding street. My mind, thank Heaven, is stored with many such recollections. Which of them shall I summon up to comfort me? Already I feel myself a willing captive, taken in a net of sunny thoughts. I draw at random from the rainbow skein.

It is a record of last Spring-time, a gossamer-memory, with the dew and sunray on it still.

In the early summer, not when 'the spring is setting in with its usual severity,' but a little later, when the streets are filled with light white-awninged carts, full of blooming flowers, and when women bearing baskets of charming posies, make sweet the London air; then it is, even more than in the autumn (I say it even now), that one longs to flee from bricks and mortar into the country. Moreover (which is surely a charm), one should not do it. Business demands one's presence in the metropolis; there is no legitimate vacation at that period for people of our quality. Hence it is the very time for a holiday. Nor can we properly enjoy it alone. I don't say that one should take one's wife and family; far from it; they will go to the sea-side, doubtless, in due time; but the epoch of which we speak is essentially masculine and (if I may say so) bachelory. It is necessary to take three friends (all of whom are also doing wrong in leaving their business at such a season), for, notwithstanding the lavish promises of the barometer, it may be wet; and the country under rain, and without the raw material of a rubber at whist, is

well known to be unbearable. Also these friends must be judiciously chosen: a morose man, a stingy man, a fool, or one incapable of laughter, would shipwreck the whole clandestine scheme. Many a man who is a very decent companion at the club in Pall Mall, would be hateful in a village inn. Finally, let everybody have to be back in town again by a certain day and hour, upon business of the most serious importance, and let nobody get back when he intended, and let that business be postponed. A certain recklessness of consequences is indispensable.

Upon the occasion I have in my mind, we were four chosen souls. Each, if not at the very summit of his profession, deserved to be there, and may be designated as if he was. There was the Merchant Prince, a man truly gorgeous in his ideas, and magnificent in the execution of them; there was the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who audited our accounts, and exhorted us to stand upon our rights whenever men oppressed us; there was Professor Beeswing (of the Entomological Society), with the most varied information, perhaps, that ever existed in a single human storehouse; and there was the Deathless Author, a gentleman whose powers of fiction are by no means confined to the construction of books. It was this last individual who had organised the expedition, and settled its destination—Willow Bridge, beautifully situate upon the river Thames, and not a thousand miles from Marlow. 'We will fish for gudgeon—creatures that you catch in myriads as you sit in an arm-chair in your punt. Then we will drop down to Cleifden Spring, and stroll in those glorious woods. I know every inch of the river. It will be divine.'

Something like this he said to all, but exhibiting some especial bait to each. To the M. P. he spoke of the cookery of river-fish, which he portrayed as unique and perfect; to the L. C. B. he held out a solemn promise that we should be warned off a certain island, which the public had nevertheless an indefeasible right to land upon and occupy; while to the Professor he painted a particular species of butterfly to be found in the vicinity

of Marlow only, in the lively colours of his own imagination. Thus it was that he seduced the party to Willow Bridge, where they put up at the *Swan-on-horseback*, 'famous inn.' In an hour or so, we had left London behind us at an infinite distance, with all its wicked works. It was a holiday in itself to mark the landlord 'seeing what he could do' in the way of sleeping-apartments and a private sitting-room; to hear the landlady express her opinion that 'it might be done'; to behold the waiter unconcerned in these arrangements, taking the air at the front-door, and shading his eyes from the fiery sun with a napkin; to watch the people leaning over the bridge, with their heads close together, and chewing straws or pieces of stick, which presently they dropped into the fleeting stream, and set to work anew. Nobody was in a Cheapside hurry; nobody was possessed by the devil of competition to tout for custom. When the Deathless Author led us down to the river-side, and bid us choose our fishing-punt, we were not torn to pieces by the skinny fingers of opposition Ancient Mariners.

'Did you want to go on the water, gentlemen?' inquired a comfortable boatman, lazily removing his pipe from his mouth with one hand, and scratching his head with the other.

'Certainly, my good man,' replied the D. A. cheerfully: 'we are come to fish for gudgeon. Big punt-arm-chairs—lots of luncheon—worms and ground-bait—floats and rods. Come, look alive!'

But the mariner only shook his head.

'There ain't no ground-fishing yet awhile, bless ye. You may get a trout, mayhap; but it's like to be a long business. How many days are you going to stay?'

'Oh, this is so like the Deathless Author,' cried the Merchant Prince with a scornful smile. 'I wonder there's a river here, for my part.'

'My dear sir—my very dear sir,' cried the D. A. 'there must be some frightful mistake. Now, leave this man to me.—Do you really mean to say that we can't go gudgeon-fishing?'

'Why, in course you can't. It's a fenced month.'

'A what? a what?' exclaimed the L. C. B., speaking very fast. 'That's a very nice question; I should be inclined to dispute that fact. Now, here is my name and address, my worthy man. O yes, we'll try this question. What do you say, Beeswing?'

'Hush! be quiet; don't move—don't stir,' returned the professor earnestly. 'You've got the most splendid specimen of the stinging dragon-fly on the nape of your neck. Only wait till I get my net.'

'The river is charming,' remarked the Deathless Author, with galvanic enthusiasm—'perfectly charming. It would have been almost too hot for fishing; let us row to Cliefden Spring. It is the most beautiful stream-scenery in the world, and the duchess permits everybody to enjoy it. I am quite sure that will please you. Yes, let us row up there. You call it "up" to Cliefden, don't you, my man?'

'Well, sir, it's down-stream, any way,' replied the mariner, regarding the D. A. as if he were little better than a born idiot.

'And this is the man who has brought us to Willow Bridge, under pretence of knowing the country!' ejaculated the M. P. 'He pretends to have

been born in the district. He assured me only last night that the *Swan-on-horseback* made up a hundred beds.'

'Never mind,' said the Professor good-naturedly; 'let us forgive him. There are beds enough, and the genus *Cimicidae* is doubtless unknown to them.'

'I am appeased,' quoth the Merchant Prince sententiously. 'Let us take boat, and be off.' And there being no gilded barge in waiting, manned with slaves in crimson, pulling silver oars, or other vessel suitable to his quality, we stepped into a painted pleasure-boat, and set off for Cliefden Spring.

I do not describe that voyage, since the same water was afterwards rowed over by the same goodly company; enough to say that it was charming as a siren's song; the Lord Chief Baron's brow grew smoother with every dip of oar; Professor Beeswing sat with half-closed eyes watching the insect creatures skimming the stream, like a happy cat dreaming of *entrées* of fish and mice. The Merchant Prince was pleased to acknowledge the attention that was shewn him by the setting Sun, and to express his satisfaction with the general arrangements of nature for his reception on the river. The Deathless Author kept a divine silence, partly because he wished the scene to sink into the soul of his companions, whose indignation still might shudder, and partly because speech was frozen within him, with the apprehension of that very misfortune which subsequently occurred.

When they came in sight of Cliefden's hanging woods, a murmur of admiration broke from two of those who had not seen that leafy paradise before. 'We forgive you—we thank you—we applaud you,' exclaimed they with a single voice, and grateful looks towards him who had organised the expedition. 'How charming it will be to plunge into the green coolness of those woods.'

The Merchant Prince, without letting himself down to vulgar jubilation, regarded the white palace glinting from the full-foliated hill above us, as though he would like to buy it.

'Can one go up to the house, and see the place?' inquired he of one of the boatmen.

'No, sir; nor *land at all*, if the duchess is at Cliefden.'

'What!' cried the three strangers, turning like one man—and not a good-tempered one either—upon the Deathless Author. 'Can this be true?'

The unhappy fictionist smiled in a ghastly manner, and gave them to understand that the boatman was a well-meaning dullard, whom it would be idle to cross-examine. 'And besides,' added he, 'the duchess is sure not to be there.'

'I don't like that,' observed the M. P. sharply, who, though so wealthy, was not deficient in intelligence.

The Lord Chief Baron cast a withering glance upon the deceiver, as upon some prevaricating witness, whom he should like to turn inside out by cunning questions.

The professor regarded him with that calm contempt which he bestows upon mayflies, and the less common *Neuroptera*, of which he has already specimens in his collection.

The Deathless Author offered not a syllable in defence. He already perceived an official person of forbidding exterior standing at the head of the landing-stairs. He knew what he was put there to say.

'Nobody can come ashore to-day, gentlemen ; the duchess is at Chieften.'

'I suppose it *is* her private property,' observed the L. C. B. reflectively ; 'one couldn't prove right of way.'

At this audacious observation the ancestral retainer glared at us as at a ship-load of blasphemers and river-pirates, and waved us off with a majestic motion of his hand.

The boatmen grinned in their sleeves, or would have done so if they had not been bare-armed, and turned the head of our little craft towards Willow Bridge.

In half an hour or so—such is the blessed influence of stream-scenery—all disappointment had faded from the memory, and even confidence in the Deathless Author was almost restored.

Of our stay at that admirable river-*inn* I shall say nothing. The chief charm of life in such a place is that nothing happens worthy of being recorded. To eat, to drink, to sleep, to saunter on the sloping lawn, and smoke the dream-compelling weed ; to lie at length within the rocking skiff, and hear the whisper of the river-nymphs, and feel their cool breath through the tender plank ; to bask beneath the willow, lulled to sleep by the thunder of the roaring weir—these things, distinct enough in the clear depths of Memory, have not a substance that the pen can picture. Man, being made for action and material matters, tires in time of all such pleasant shadows. There was a bridegroom staying at Willow Bridge, who, it was plain, for his part, had had more than enough of them. How he did gape, and yawn, and sigh for very weariness ! The obsequious manner in which he strove to make himself agreeable to us, and thereby win conversation and relief from inexpressible *tedium vita*, was touching to behold. But four is company, and five is none, so we cast the poor wretch from us. We froze him with our icy speech as he strove to climb into our pleasure-galley out of the ocean of *ennui* ; we jested among each other at his drowning agonies, and threw champagne bottles, as it were, at his head as he went down. We chopped his fingers, figuratively speaking, with sharp epigrams, and so made him loose his hold. He must have looked upon us like a second crew of the *Flower Land*.

The L. C. B., who is a determined bachelor, remorselessly bade him cleave to his lawful wife. Indeed, we had no sort of pity for him. *We* had not been shut up for three weeks at Willow Bridge with a feeble young female, who objected to smoking. *We* did not hear a still small voice—but getting perceptibly louder—crying : 'Charles, love, the tea has been brought up ! THE TEA IS READY, CHARLES, DEAREST ! THE TEA IS GETTING COLD, CHARLES !'

At which last sentence, or *ultimatum*, Charles surrendered at discretion, and went in wearily through the French window. No, for our part, we welcomed such lotus-eating (which included two courses of excellent fresh-water fish) very gladly, and were truly grieved when the time came for us to part. When it became absolutely essential that the M. P. should preside at the meeting of the Golconda Mine Company ; when it was a *sine quâ non* that the L. C. B. should state his views upon a matter of trespass before a high legal tribunal ; when the Professor must needs read his exhaustive paper upon the emanations of the *Silphidae* before the Society for the Encouragement of Insect Know-

ledge ; when the Deathless Author, whose word was his bond—and quite equal in pecuniary value—had solemnly promised to personally superintend the production of one of his own volumes in Paternoster Row ; it was on that very morning, I say, when Duty, with her customary scowl, was bidding us resume hateful Toil within city walls, and leave the rare spring sunshine, and the gleaming river, and the emerald fields, that the Merchant Prince astonished the company, as the fatal railway omnibus drove to the door, by observing with audacious calmness : 'I have a great idea, my friends ; we won't go by the train at all.'

'Our luggage is packed,' sighed the Professor, pointing mournfully to his large tin butterfly case and little carpet-bag awaiting removal in the passage.

'Let the luggage go, then,' returned the M. P. authoritatively. 'But as for us, let us drop down the river to London.'

So immeasurably distant did Willow Bridge, and especially its winding river, appear to us to be from the great Babylon, that this suggestion struck us all aghast.

'Drop down the river !' repeated the L. C. B. doubtfully, and as though he saw several flaws in the proposition already. 'Down to Windsor, you mean.'

'Down to London Bridge !' quoth the M. P. resolutely. 'Land short of that—say at Blackfriars—and the whole scheme would be a failure.'

The Deathless Author already perceived himself in a frail skiff, amid the whirling eddies of Westminster, rocked by express steamers, and coming to grief against the piers of bridges. His countenance was unmistakably negative.

The Professor murmured that it was impossible to observe the *Phryganea* beyond Hammersmith.

'Very good,' observed the Merchant Prince, with the air of a man who has given up a point to oblige his fellow-creatures. 'Let us say Hampton Court. We shall then have only fifty miles or so to row.'

'Row !' exclaimed the L. C. B. 'I would not row ten miles for—'

'My friends,' interrupted the Merchant Prince majestically, 'the matter is in my hands. When I say "we shall row," I mean it in the same sense as "we shall sail." No physical exertion will be necessary. I engage a crew of two. We take turns in the arduous duties of steering. I invite you to dine with me at Hampton Court.'

In half an hour, we were dropping down the river, in the good skiff *Cygnet*, between the level meadows down to Camelot—no, to Cookham. The boat was green and gold, the cushions scarlet, and the even dip of the four oars had a silver sound. All else was silent, save for the hiss of the angry swan, as we came too near her throne among the osiers, or infringed upon her royal progress through the river ; and save for the monotone of the cuckoo in the far-distant woods. Only, ever and anon, our stroke would rest upon his oars, and raise his voice in a wild melody of 'Lok, Lok, Lok,' and the lockman would come forth from his cottage, and open wide the barriers of the flood, and shut us in. Then slowly sank the boat, and the water with it, till the trim bright garden sloping to the brink could be seen no more, and the black gates loomed larger and larger moment by moment, and the dark sides of our water-prison deepened. Then, upon ransom being

counted out, sometimes into a little cup at the end of a pole, with which, for convenience of payment, our warden favoured us—as a child feeds Bruins in a bear-pit—he let the sunlight once more in upon us, and set us on the broad and shining river-road. I am afraid to say how many of these aquatic turnpikes we passed through, but we never tired of them, though each was as like to each as are sweet-pease. We concocted out of them a sensation novel for the Deathless Author, entitled the *Lock-keeper's Daughter*, of which, since he was not grateful for it, I am almost induced to publish the plot. Suffice it to say, however, that our heroine fled from her amphibious home in evil hour, and returned only to perish there by her own act : when her father opened the gates to the first-comer in the summer morning, her golden hair was mingled with the weeds that clung to them ; and ever afterwards there was a ghastly cry of 'Lok, Lok, Lok' oft heard at night. If the plot of this Lock story should be too involved, suggested the L. C. B. (whose nature is cynical), Chubb (of which there was plenty in the neighbourhood) would doubtless supply it with a Key.

We composed the most thrilling parts of this original narrative in the various boat-houses into which we were driven by the passing spring showers ; and a general curdling of the blood, known to novel-readers as 'creepiness' (a little assisted, perhaps, by the change of temperature), was inwardly experienced on such occasions. The steering into these havens of refuge was by no means an easy matter ; the entrances were always narrow, though they afforded a wide field for discussion as to how they should be approached ; and often-times the passengers of the *Cygnets* found themselves, along with their unskilful coxswain, exposed to the whole fury of the elements, while the rowers, in the more favoured half of the boat, were under cover. Everybody thinks that he can poke a fire and steer a boat. I dare not record how many times we grounded on the golden shallows under the haughty guidance of the Merchant Prince ; how often we stuck upon sandbanks, over which the L. C. B. insisted upon trying his favourite question of right of way ; how often the spectacled Professor, bent on dragonflies, took us slap into the osiers. Once the Deathless Author (besides minor errors), seeking to win renown by taking the boat through a narrow arch without unshipping, came full butt against the buttress, and nearly brought both voyage and voyagers to their end. There were lively discussions upon our individual merits as navigators ; ingenious theories as to why swans tip themselves topsy-turvy, and remain with the other end of them (if I may say so) growing perpendicularly out of the water like a white cabbage ; and learned explanations from the Professor of the phenomenon of the legs of the cattle upon the bank being only reflected in the stream *half-way*, and of what became of the other half.

The cattle, whether they so stood in the cool meadow-grass, or descended to the cooler wave, were always a charming sight, as likewise were the swans, whichever end was uppermost. From stately Windsor, crowned with its royal abode, down to the smallest hamlet, every dwelling-place of man looked bright and beauteous. A hundred gray church towers greeted us through stately trees ; a thousand villas smiled upon us from their flowery gardens.

'Nice,' said the Merchant Prince, with semi-approval, 'from June to August ; from August to June, nice also, doubtless, for frogs, toads, newts, and water-rats.'

But the M. P. had been put out of bliss by some cow-beef, of which we had imprudently partaken at a river-inn, and also made a little despondent by certain memoranda in a literary work—*The Oarsman's Companion*, I think it was called—found in the pocket of our stroke. Nobody, it said, should ever step into a pleasure-boat without knowing how to behave towards the apparently drowned.

Avoid all rough usage, was the first canon.

'Why, what a set of ruffians aquatic folks must be,' exclaimed the M. P., 'to need such an admonition ! Would these boatmen proceed to kick us, if we fell overboard ?'

Never hold the body up by the feet !

'Did you ever hear of anything so barbarous ?'

Nor roll the body on casks !

'Really, this is too horrible ! Casks !'

Nor rub the body with salt or spirits !

'These men must be cannibals, my friends.'

Nor inject tobacco-smoke or its infusion into the nostrils.

'I don't like this,' quoth the Merchant Prince, closing the horrid little volume, and wiping his brow with his pocket-handkerchief ; 'let us get out and walk.'

'Ay, let us walk,' cried the L. C. B., who is a member of the Alpine Club ; 'we have had enough of sitting and of steering, we.'

'We have had more than enough of *your steering*,' replied the Deathless Author viciously ; 'but let me beg that there may be no pedestrianism. Walking means no pleasant talking, no leisure, no laughter ; it means perspiration, dust, and the malignant joy of seeing others more tired than ourselves.'

But the words of the wise were disregarded. It was arranged that the boat should go on to Hampton in advance of us, while we disembarked, and made our way thither by the dusty roads. Those whom the gods wish to ruin, they first cause to take to pedestrianism. Before he left the galley, however, the M. P. had a lucid interval. 'Let us write down,' said he, 'our orders for dinner, so that our boatmen may leave them with the landlord, and we may find the banquet prepared on our arrival. Which is the best inn ?'

'The Toy, the Toy,' returned the Deathless Author gloomily, averse to leave the silvery stream, the frequent splash of happy bathers, the scarlet cushions, and the motion without toil.

'To the landlord of the Toy, then, greeting : *Whitebait indispensable*,' quoth the Merchant Prince, holding a turquoise pencil in his jewelled fingers—'*asparagus unlimited* ; *Moselle-cup iced*. Let us leave the rest of the repast to his own genius !'

I forbear to speak of that walk to Hampton along the hot white roads ; after the first ten minutes, all sank into the usual sulky silence. The L. C. B. alone, knowing what his legs could do, smiled grimly. All of a sudden, as we drew near our bourne, after hours of painful exertion, we beheld vast crowds of people coming forth to meet us.

The Deathless Author, well convinced that all would be laid to him in the way of misadventure, hung back a little, and addressed his silent friends, all walking for their lives.

'Look here,' said he; 'you'll say it's me, of course; but I never advised your coming to dine at Hampton Court on a *Whit-Monday*.'

At these hideous words, the three stopped suddenly, and gazed reproachfully at the speaker.

'So like him,' said the M.P., pointing with a scornful finger—'so very, very like him!'

'There will be nothing to eat at all,' groaned the L.C.B.

'Little or nothing,' sighed the Professor, looking into his case of entomological specimens, as into a larder.

We trudged on in dust and gloom. There were forty thousand persons under the chestnuts in Bushy Park. There would be a good many more in the inns. Still, man is prone to hope. We inquired at the first house we came to, which was the way to *the Toy*.

'*The Toy*,' was the reply, 'does not exist: it has been turned these three years into a row of private houses.'

All groaned.

'So very, very like him,' quoth the Merchant Prince, with majestic pity. 'Here is a fly-jump in. To the *Star and Garter*, Richmond.'

'But the boatmen?' murmured the L.C.B.—'we are clearly liable.'

'They have my name and address,' responded the M.P. loftily. 'I am as fixed to go to Richmond as was ever General Grant.'

So, in the glorious eventide, it happened that, sitting after a royal banquet over goodly wine, we once more saw the winding river which had borne us so far and well upon its quiet bosom, smelt once more the cool, soft river-airs, made odorous on their way by lilac flower and chestnut bloom, and all the sweetness of the land in spring. Then, pledging each the other, did we vow we never should forget that glorious holiday, but, marked with white in our life's kalends, would keep it sweet and fair within our memory for evermore.

THE AGE OF IRON.

MR SMILES'S *Industrial Biography* unites all the adventurous charm of romance to all the didactic merits of reality. Names hitherto known only to the scientific few are here familiarised to the 'general reader,' and placed in such a light that he must almost blush to think how long his admiration and respect have been withheld from them.

Perhaps the strongest, because the most startling impression of Mr Smiles's book is that felt in realising, through its pages, the tardiness of England's metallurgic development. We all know that iron was mined and smelted in considerable quantities in this island as far back as the time of the Romans; and we cherish a vague notion that iron must have been mined and smelted here ever since on a progressively increasing scale. We are so accustomed to think and speak of ourselves as *facile principes*, among all nations, at the smelting-furnace, in the smithy, and amid the Titanic labours of the mechanical work-shop, that we open large eyes when we are told what a recent conquest all this superiority is!

There was, indeed, some centuries later than the Roman occupation, a period coming down to quite modern times, during which English iron-mines were left almost unworked. In Edward

III.'s reign, the pots, spits, and frying-pans of the royal kitchen were classed among his majesty's jewels. The greater profusion and excellence of Spanish iron compared with English, was held by the planners of the Armada to be an important element in their calculations of success. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the home-market looked to Spain and Germany for its supply both of iron and steel. After that, Sweden came prominently forward; and from her, as late as the middle of the eighteenth century, no less than four-fifths of the iron used in this country was imported!

The reason of this marvellous neglect of what has since proved one of our main sources of wealth, lay in the enormous consumption of timber which the old smelting processes entailed. The charcoal used in producing a single ton of pig-iron represented four loads of wood, and that required for a ton of bar-iron represented seven loads. Of course, the neighbourhood of a forest was an essential condition to the establishment of ironworks; but wherever such an establishment was effected, the forest disappeared with portentous rapidity. At Lamberhurst alone, with so trifling a produce as five tons per week, the annual consumption of wood was two hundred thousand cords. Taking this as the ratio, the timber wealth of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex—which counties were then the centres of our iron industry—seemed menaced with speedy annihilation. In the destruction of these great forests, that of our maritime power was supposed to be intimately involved; so that it is easy to understand how, in those days, the development of the iron manufacture came to be regarded in the light of a national calamity, and a fitting subject for restrictive legislation! Various acts were passed, towards the end of the sixteenth century, prohibiting smelting-furnaces within twenty-two miles of London, and many of the Sussex masters found themselves compelled, in consequence, to break up their works. During the civil wars of the seventeenth century, a severe blow was given to the trade by the destruction of all furnaces belonging to royalists—which, by the way, can hardly have roused much indignation in any but the owners, since we find the crown itself, after the Restoration, demolishing its own works in the Forest of Dean, on the old plea, that the supply of ship-building timber was thereby imperilled.

'From this time,' says Mr Smiles, 'the iron manufacture of Sussex, as of England generally, rapidly declined. In 1740, there were only fifty-nine furnaces in all England, of which ten were in Sussex; and in 1788, there were only two. A few years later, and the Sussex iron-furnaces were blown out altogether. Farnhurst in Western, and Ashburnham in Eastern Sussex witnessed the total extinction of the manufacture. The din of the iron hammer was hushed, the glare of the furnace faded, the last blast of the bellows was blown, and the district returned to its original rural solitude. Some of the furnace-ponds were drained, and planted with hops or willows; others formed beautiful lakes in retired pleasure-grounds; while the remainder were used to drive flour-mills, as the streams in North Kent, instead of driving fulling-mills, were employed to work paper-mills.'

Few of our readers can be unacquainted with the fact, that iron-smelting, at the present day, is

performed not with wood, but with coal. It will readily, then, be understood that the substitution of the one description of fuel for the other must have formed the turning-point in the history of the British iron manufacture. This substitution, however, was brought about very slowly. The prejudice against coal was for a long period extreme; its use for domestic purposes was pronounced detrimental to health; and even for purposes of manufacture, it was generally condemned. Nevertheless, as wood became scarcer and dearer, a closer examination into the capabilities of coal came naturally to be made; and here, as in almost every other industrial path, we find a foreigner acting as our pioneer. Simon Sturtevant, a German, was the first who took out patent for smelting iron with coal. But his process, however theoretically correct, proved a failure, and the patent was cancelled. Other Germans, naturalised here, followed in Sturtevant's footsteps, but with no better results; until at last an Englishman, Dud Dudley, took up the idea, and gave it that practical applicability which the theorising Teutons had characteristically missed. Dud was a natural son of Lord Dudley of Dudley; but the less severe or more obsequious morals of those days do not seem to have held his birth to be any detriment to his social position. The town of Dudley was even then a centre of the iron manufacture, and Dud's noble father owned several furnaces. But here, also, the forest-wealth of the district was fast melting away, and the trade already languished under the dread of impending dissolution. In the immediate neighbourhood, meanwhile, coal was abundant, with ironstone and limestone in close proximity to it. Dud, who, as a child, had haunted and scrutinised his father's ironworks with wondering delight, was placed just at this juncture in charge of a furnace and a couple of forges, and immediately turned his energetic mind to the question of smelting with coal. Some careful experiments succeeded so well, that he wrote to his father, requesting him to take out a patent for the process; and this patent, registered in Lord Dudley's name, and dated the 22d February 1620, properly inaugurated the great metallurgic revolution which has made the English iron-trade what it now is.

Nevertheless, even with this positive success on record, the inert insular mind long refused to follow the path cleared for it. Dud's discovery 'was neither appreciated by the iron-masters nor by the workmen'; and all schemes for smelting ore with any other fuel than wood-charcoal were regarded with incredulity. His secret seems to have been bequeathed to no one, and for many years after his death, the old much-abused forest-devouring system went tottering on. Stern necessity, however, taught its hard lesson at last, and a period insensibly arrived when the employment of coal in smelting processes became the rule rather than the exception, and might be seen here and there on an unusually large scale—especially at the celebrated Colebrookdale works, in the valley of the Severn.

The founder of the Colebrookdale metallurgic *principato* was a Quaker—Abraham Darby. A small furnace had existed on the spot ever since the days of the Tudors, and this small furnace formed the nucleus of that prototype of Pandemonium, which the visitor of Colebrookdale surveys with such wonder at the present day.

In Darby's times, the principal cooking utensils of the poorer classes were pots and kettles made of cast-iron. But even this primitive ware was beyond native skill, and most of the utensils in question were imported from Holland. Exercising an effort of judgment, which, moderate as it was, seems to have been hitherto unexampled, Darby resolved to pay that country a visit, and ascertain in person why it was that Dutch castings were so good, and English so bad. The use of dry sand instead of clay for the moulds comprised, he found, the whole secret.

On returning to England, Darby took out a patent for the new process, and his castings soon acquired repute. The use of pit-coal in the Colebrookdale furnaces is not supposed, however, to have become general until the worthy Abraham had been succeeded by his son; but when it once did become so, the impetus thereby given to the iron-trade and to coal-mining was immense. It is the latter industry which may pre-eminently claim to have called the steam-engine into existence. The demand for pumping-power adequate to the drainage of deep mines, set Newcomen's brain to work; and the engine rough-sketched by his ingenuity, and perfected by the genius of Watt, soon increased enormously the production of iron by rendering coal more accessible, and the blast-furnace more efficient.

A son-in-law of Abraham Darby's, Richard Reynolds by name, made a great stride towards the modern railway by substituting iron for wood on the tramways which connected the different works at Colebrookdale; and it was a grandson of the same Abraham who designed and erected the first iron bridge.

England, we have seen, borrowed the idea of her smelting processes and iron-castings from Germany and Holland; but the discovery of that important material, cast-steel, belongs, at least, to one of her own sons. Yet even here the relationship is a merely conventional one. Benjamin Huntsman was the child of German parents, who had settled, only a few years before his birth, in a country which has treated their son so truly with the indifference of a stepmother, that it is a Frenchman of the present day who first draws her attention to his merits, and rescues his memory from utter oblivion!

Huntsman's original calling was that of a clock-maker; but his remarkable mechanical skill, his shrewdness, and his practical sense, soon gave him the repute of the 'wise man' of the district, and brought neighbours to consult him not only as to the repair of every ordinary sort of machinery, but also of the human frame—the most complex of all machines! It was his daily experience of the inferior quality of the tools at his command, that led him to experimentalise in the manufacture of steel. What his experiments were, we have no record to shew; but that they must have been conducted with Teutonic patience, there can be no doubt, from the formidable nature of the difficulties overcome.

England, however, long refused to make use of Huntsman's precious material, although produced in her very midst. The Sheffield cutlers would have nothing to do with a substance so much harder than anything they were accustomed to, and Huntsman was actually compelled to look for his market abroad! All the cast-steel he could

manufacture was sent over to France, and the merit of employing this material for general purposes belongs originally to that country.

Steel is the material of which the instruments of labour are essentially made. Upon the quality of the material, that of the instrument naturally depends, and upon the quality of the instrument, that, in great measure, of the work. Watt's marvellous invention ran great risk, at one time, of being abandoned, for the simple reason, that the mechanical capacities of the age were not 'up' to its embodiment. Even after Watt had secured the aid of Boulton's best workmen, Smeaton gave it as his opinion, that the steam-engine could never be brought into general use, because of the difficulty of getting its various parts made with the requisite precision.

The execution by machinery of work ordinarily executed by hand-tools, has been a gigantic stride in the path of material civilisation. The earliest phase of the great modern movement in this direction is represented, probably, by the saw-mill. A saw-mill was erected near London as long ago as 1663—by a foreigner—but was shortly abandoned, in consequence of the determined hostility of the sawyers; and more than a century elapsed before another mill was put up. But the saw-mill is comparatively a rude structure, and the material it operates upon is easily treated, even by the hand. When we come to deal, however, with such substances as iron and steel, the benefit of machinery becomes incalculable. Without our recent machine-tools, indeed, the stupendous iron creations of the present day would have been impossible at any cost; for no amount of hand-labour could ever attain that perfect exactitude of construction, without which it would be idle to attempt fitting the component parts of these colossal structures together.

The first impulse, however, to the improvement of machine-tools for iron-work, was given by a difficulty born not of mass, but of minuteness.

Up to the end of the last century, the locks in common use among us were of the rudest description, and afforded scarcely any security against thieves. To meet this universal want, Joseph Bramah set his remarkable inventive faculties to work, and speedily contrived a lock so perfect, that, after eighty years' trial, it still holds its ground. But Bramah's locks are machines of the most delicate kind, depending for their efficiency upon the precision with which their component parts are finished; and, seventy or eighty years ago, the attainment of this precision, at such a price as to render the lock an article of extensive commerce, seemed an insuperable difficulty. In his dilemma, Bramah's attention was directed to a youngster in the Woolwich Arsenal smithy, named Henry Maudsley, whose reputation for ingenuity was already great among his fellows. Bramah was at first almost ashamed to take such a mere lad into his counsels; but a preliminary conversation convinced him that his confidence would not be misplaced. He persuaded Maudsley to enter his employment, and the result was the invention, between them, of the planing-machine, applicable either to wood or metal, as also of certain improvements in the old lathe, more particularly of that known as the 'slide-rest'.

In the old-fashioned lathe, the workman guided his cutting-tool by sheer muscular strength, and

the slightest variation in the pressure necessarily led to an irregularity of surface. The rest for the hand is in this case fixed, and the tool held by the workman travels along it. Now, the principle of the slide-rest is the opposite of this. The rest itself holds the tool firmly fixed in it, and slides along the bench in a direction parallel with the axis of the work. All that the workman has to do, therefore, is to turn a screw-handle, by means of which the cutter is carried along with the smallest possible expenditure of strength; and even this trifling labour has been since got rid of, by making the rest self-acting.

Simple and obvious as this improvement seems, its importance cannot be overrated. The accuracy it insured was precisely the desideratum of the day! By means of the slide-rest, the most delicate as well as the most ponderous pieces of machinery can be turned with mathematical precision; and from this invention must date that extraordinary development of mechanical power and production which is a characteristic of the age we live in. 'Without the aid of the vast accession to our power of producing perfect mechanism which it at once supplied,' says a first-class judge in matters of the kind, 'we could never have worked out into practical and profitable forms the conceptions of those master-minds who, during the past half-century, have so successfully pioneered the way for mankind. The steam-engine itself, which supplies us with such unbounded power, owes its present perfection to this most admirable means of giving to metallic objects the most precise and perfect geometrical forms. How could we, for instance, have good steam-engines, if we had not the means of boring out a true cylinder, or turning a true piston-rod, or planing a valve-face?'

It would perhaps be impossible to cite any more authoritative estimate of Maudsley's invention than the above. The words placed between inverted commas are the words of James Nasmyth, the illustrious savant who invented that wonderful steam-hammer, which Professor Tomlinson characterises as 'one of the most perfect of artificial machines, and noblest triumphs of mind over matter that modern English engineers have yet developed.'

This machine enlarged at one bound the whole scale of working in iron, and permitted Maudsley's lathe to develop its entire range of capacity. The old 'tilt-hammer' was so constructed that the more voluminous the material submitted to it, the less was the power attainable; so that as soon as certain dimensions had been exceeded, the hammer became utterly useless. When the *Great Western* steam-ship was in course of construction, tenders were invited from the leading mechanical firms for the supply of the enormous paddle-shaft required for her engines. But a forging of the size in question had never been executed, and no firm in England would undertake the contract. In this dilemma, Mr Nasmyth was applied to, and the result of his study of the problem was this marvellous steam-hammer—so powerful that it will forge an Armstrong hundred-pounder as easily as a farrier forges a horseshoe, and so delicately manageable that it will crack a nut without bruising its kernel!

After going over thus rapidly the historical groundwork of Mr Smiles's book, we should be giving a very inadequate idea of its attractions

were we to omit reference to its biographical details. If the historical element lends a masculine interest to the narrative, the biographical diffuses through it a special charm. There is something singularly grateful to the moral sense in contemplating the calm which seems almost invariably to pervade the inner life of these restless and rugged battlers with the powers of iron and of fire. Scientific pursuits exercise, no doubt, a certain purifying influence on character, since they bring into strongest activity the faculties sympathising least with the sensuous propensities of our nature. But this influence is, *prima facie*, negative only; whereas, in the instances before us, we find an active benevolence so uniformly accompanying scientific eminence, that we are almost forced to surmise a position relative between the two.

Generally speaking, our industrial magnates can claim the honourable distinction of having been the architects, from the very foundation-stone, of their own fortunes. Even in those few instances where their origin has not been what is termed 'obscure,' they have had exceptional difficulties to contend with, which have quite overbalanced all adventitious aids. Dud Dudley, for example, succumbed before the hopeless disadvantage of being 'born before his time'; and Mr Nasmyth, in spite of an ancient pedigree, began his industrial career in an attic, with an income of ten shillings a week—neither more nor less.

There are few narratives, perhaps, more attractive than those in which we follow, step by step, the successful efforts of intellect to rise above the brute 'force of circumstances'—*praestante labore, ad summas emergere opes*. A brief sketch of his early career, from Mr Nasmyth's own hand, possesses this attractiveness in a high degree, but is too compressed in its simplicity to bear either extract or condensation. William Fairbairn seems also to have supplied Mr Smiles with anecdotes of his boyhood and youth, which would be interesting even without their personal associations. The picture of the brave lad, penniless, hungry, and despondent, refusing a proffered half-crown, might form a worthy pendant to Samuel Johnson's scornful rejection of the new shoes, as painted for us, in its true heroic proportions, by Thomas Carlyle! The name of Fairbairn is the last on Mr Smiles's list, and with it we shall most worthily bring this sketch of Industrial Biography to a close.

MARRIED BENEATH HIM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LOST SIR MASSINGBERD.'

CHAPTER VI.—AN EDITOR OUT OF TOWN.

THAT man must be an egotist indeed who has never chosen unto himself a hero; who has never looked up to one living fellow-creature, and done him homage in his own heart, as from vassal and inferior. In childhood, we have only love or fear for those about us; but as soon as we are big enough to go to school, we nourish admiration.

The Cock of the School is commonly our first idol; but he is so far removed from us—on so tremendous a pedestal—that we set up a god in the same temple, to satisfy our reverential needs; such as Goldenmuth, the best classic, or Juan Major, who kissed the master's niece, or Gravemug, who got the divinity prize, or Chinks, whose father allowed

him half-a-crown a week of extra pocket-money—according to the bent of our own disposition.

In adolescence, we no longer require the real presence of these objects of veneration. Our then Pantheon, which has been entirely restocked, and in which all the old statues have fallen to pieces of themselves, is composed for the most part of the heads, or of those we believe to be the heads, of the calling to which we ourselves aspire: the Rev. Bohun Erges, Slimy Suttle, Q.C., or Admiral Buster. In manhood, and brought face to face with these chieftains, we perceive their metal to be so plentifully streaked with alloy, that the whole collection is afterwards carted away, and shot as rubbish; or we use the materials to form a few steps and a pediment, which we ascend ourselves, and remain there for the rest of our lives, in a classical attitude.

During the five or six months that succeeded the hawking at Chaldecote Bottom, the man who filled the largest space in the thoughts and aspirations of Frederick Galton was Mr Jonathan Johnson, barrister of the Middle Temple, and conductor of that tremendous periodical, the *Paternoster Porcupine*.

The young fellow looked forward to Christmas as to a blessed season that should bring a living editor before his eyes for the first time. He pictured to himself an intellectual-looking being, all forehead and hair, whose conversation would be epigrammatic. The reality was disappointing. Mr Jonathan Johnson had but little forehead, though his head was as bare as a bell-handle. His conversation may have been epigrammatic in intention, but that was all that could be said for it; it certainly was not antithetical, for he did but very rarely finish a sentence. The poor man had such a habit of stammering, that he could scarcely enunciate a single remark to the end, but repeated the first half of it a great many times over, by way of compensation. He arrived early one Sunday morning quite unexpectedly in a gig from the railway station, a vehicle having been despatched for him by the curate, according to mutual arrangement upon the preceding day in vain.

He had nun—nun—not been able to leave tut—tut—town; he had not been able to leave tut—tut—town in time to tut—tut—take; he had not been able to leave town in time to take advantage of that arrangement. He could now only stay till Monday. He got on with his conversation exactly like a carpenter with his plane, perpetually going back again over the same plank until it was all smooth and free from nodosities. He said that that was the only way to kuk—kuk—cure a fuff—fuff—fell, the only way to cure a fellow of stammering. But the method was certainly tedious, and had not cured Mr Jonathan Johnson. If you suggested a word to him when he was in difficulties, he would—unlike any other person who suffers from the like misfortune—reject it scornfully, although it was the very thing he wanted. He would hold you, with the tenacity of the Ancient Mariner, in direst expectancy, while his colloquial plane was working, and you must listen (unless you knocked him down) until he had finished to his liking, or was brought up short by some insurmountable difficulty—a *b* or a *d*—in which case he would suddenly exclaim: 'It's of no kuk—kuk—consequence,' and wink with cheerfulness, as though he had made a most satisfactory peroration.

He had been so long in stating whether he would come to ch—ch—church or not, that the curate had walked off without him, leaving Frederick to conduct him thither, if it should please the great man to condescend so far, which it presently did. It was the winter-custom of Frederick and his father to sit in the rectory pew in preference to their own, because it had a fireplace in it, as the squire's pew also had, in that old-fashioned feudal church at Casterton. The curate was unable to make any alteration without leave of the absent rector, and was obliged to preach like a prison chaplain to a congregation who could not see one another, to a flock each family of which was folded in a separate pew. There were galleries indeed, and some few free seats in the aisle, with no back to them, for the very poor; but the majority of the audience were enabled to enjoy themselves to the full after the fashion of that ingenuous farmer who confessed to his bishop that for his part he always passed sermon-time very comfortably: 'I lays up my legs, my lord, and shuts my eyes, and just thinks of nothing like.' The interior of the edifice was clean, because it was white-washed throughout; but it could scarcely be termed imposing. The Ten Commandments, which depended from a great beam which crossed the centre, were obscured by twice that number of fire-buckets, for which the churchwardens could find no fitter place. The upper gallery was so close to the roof that it was, for seclusion and independence, almost as good as a pew. Unless one snored very loudly, the preacher could never tell one was asleep there, and so entertain a grudge that might influence the distribution of the compliments of the season, in the shape of coals and blankets—for even divines are men, and it is doubtful whether many of them would now a days be found to heal a Eutychus, even if they had the gift. To Mr Jonathan Johnson, however, whose mind was not deeply imbued with the proprieties of ecclesiastical architecture, the arrangements of Casterton Church were satisfactory in a very high degree. The sight of the fire in his pew delighted him hugely; he flattered it, cautiously and tenderly, with the poker throughout the service, and even surreptitiously heaped coals upon it during the Litany, to the great scandal of the curate, who could not but behold the transaction, by reason of his elevated position.

'This pew of yours is a pa—pa—pattern, sir,' observed he, behind his hymn-book, to Frederick. 'It is the greatest mistake to connect discomfort with devotion, as the High Church people do. I hate those low-backed seats, where everybody looks at the pup—pup—parting of one's hair behind.'

Frederick thought within himself that it must have been some time since such a liberty could possibly have been taken with the back of Mr Johnson's head; but he only bowed gravely, blushing, too, not a little, because he felt that his uncle's eyes were fixed upon him and his companion like a couple of burning-glasses.

After morning church, Mr Johnson paid so much devotion to cold beef and pickles, and, in particular, to some venerable cherry-brandy—which he endeavoured to explain was taken only as a stut—stut—stut, but finally observed that it was of no consequence—that he pronounced himself unfit to attend afternoon service. Fred, therefore accompanied the profane one in a walk up Leckhamsley Round. Winter had drawn his winding-sheet over the

whole landscape, and Nature lay stark and gaunt beneath the glittering robe. The far-off river in the vale, which, save in the snow-time, glistened so brightly in the sunbeams, now alone looked blue and dull. The chalk-roads were one with the white Down. A few stunted thorns in the near foreground were transformed by the lavish genius of the season into trees of frosted silver. The pigeon-house that towered above the rick-yard of Farmer Groves, as fitly as banner over citadel, was silver too, and of a pattern more exquisite and chaste than ever was designed by artist-jeweller. The outlying cottages—disgraceful to the land in their scant accommodation (although no worse at Casterton than elsewhere in the Down country)—ill-floored, ill-roofed, ill-kept—shone forth like fairy bowers; the very pigsties dazzled the eyes that looked upon them; for Snow, like Purity herself, makes everything she touches beautiful, however homely.

'How very glorious!' exclaimed Frederick, rapt in admiration of the scene, and forgetting in it for a moment even the presence of the conductor of the *Porcupine*.

Mr Jonathan Johnson observed, with considerable difficulty, that it was very cold.

'But what a scene!' exclaimed the young man apologetically.

'It looks like Death, sir,' returned the other with a shudder, 'and as though there were no more twenty port, nor anybody to drink it. Let us go home; and, by the by, why did that uncle of yours ask me down to Casterton, my young friend? He don't care tuppence for me, and he don't revere the *Porcupine*.'

'I am thinking, sir, of adding a humble unit to the literary profession in my own person, and he hoped that you might be induced to exert your powerful influence in my favour.'

'Bless my soul, what a plain-spoken young gentleman you are! It's quite refreshing,' stammered the gentleman from town. 'So I am asked down here to be your usher into the world of letters, am I? Well, with all my heart, my lad, I'm sure, for I think I like you. We will talk the matter over after dinner to-night. But call me horse if I don't make Morrit pay for it. It shall cost him a second bottle to-night, I promise him, though it should give me gout in the stut—stut—stut—It's of no consequence.'

CHAPTER VII.—ACROSS THE WALNUTS AND THE WINE.

The curate dined at five o'clock, as his custom was upon the Sunday; but it was near eleven before his guest and nephew could be induced to leave the table. He delivered the conversation almost entirely into their hands, partly because he judged it better that the youth should make his own way with the man of letters, and partly because there were few subjects on which the editor and himself could converse without risk of a quarrel. With respect to religious matters, indeed, Mr Jonathan Johnson was quite prepared to endorse the curate's views, just as he would have deferred to a soldier's opinion regarding military affairs, or a builder's concerning bricks and mortar; but as to politics, the gentleman from London opined that the ideas of a person vegetating at Casterton were quite unworthy of

the least consideration. Like all college Fellows who have become metropolitans, he despised such as remained at the university, or shut themselves out of the world, just as the emigrated Scotchman contemns the Caledonian pure and simple. He himself professed the shifting faith of a Liberal Conservative, and held a Tory to be a sort of political mastodon.

'There's only one Tory left in London, sir, and that is my sub-editor, Percival Potts,' said Mr Johnson, after a controversy warmer than usual: 'you shall be introduced to him the very next time you come to town.'

The Rev. Robert Morrit muttered something in reply respecting editors both in-chief and subordinate, which, let us hope, was only a quotation from the communion service; and nothing more was said upon the matter. There followed, indeed, rather an awkward pause, until Mr Johnson broke it by requesting to know how a young fellow like Frederick, who had no sermons to plagiarise, and no sick people to frighten, managed to pass the wintry time at Casterton.

'I go out bat-folding,' returned the young man, laughing.

'Explain yourself. Bat-folding!' echoed the man of letters, with genuine wonder. 'Come, I am going to learn something.'

It is equally impossible to set forth in words the self-complacent expression of Mr Johnson as he uttered that remark, or the contempt that overspread his entertainer's features as he listened to it. The editor and the curate each imagined one another to be the most ignorant (consistently with presumption) of the human species; they had each also an unduly elevated opinion of their own intelligence.

'We go out,' pursued Frederick, 'on nights when there is no moon, with a folding-net about six feet high, and with long handles, which requires a powerful man to work them properly. Another carries a lantern; the rest have very long sticks to beat the covers with. Our game, which is mainly sparrows, is found in ivied walls, under house-tiles, and beneath the eaves of ricks. The netter spreads his snare over such places as these, and the lantern is held behind it; then we thrash the ivy or poke the eaves with our sticks, and out fly the half-awakened victims, making straight for the light, and on their way get entangled in the meshes. When a sufficient number are thus obtained, the net is folded, and thrown on the ground, and the game is secured. Sometimes we make prey of a larger bird than we intended. We were "folding" in the ivy underneath Farmer Groves's windows last night; he put his head out suddenly to know what was the matter, and we, who thought it was an owl, clapped the net together rather sharply. I have his night-cap now.'

Fred produced the article in question—a white bag, large enough for a beehive, and with an elegant appendage of red cotton. 'In native ivy, tassel hung,' said he, 'we found it.'

'The lad is always quoting, or misquoting, from your modern poets, Johnson. The poor boy thinks he is a genius like yourself, and wants you to give him a lift upon the long road of literature. I shall esteem it a personal kindness, if you can do so.'

The curate exceedingly disliked this asking of favours. It was a foolish boast of his, that he had never been indebted for anything to any man

—that no one had ever put so much as a finger to help him with his earthly burden. It especially galled him to have to appeal to such a man as Johnson, that his nephew might be apprenticed to such a trade as Literature.

'Your nephew is very young,' observed the editor doubtfully, inflating his lungs, as the manner of some prosperous persons is when they are about to be patronising: 'he must fuff—fuff—first fill his pub—pub—pub'

'His pocket,' suggested the curate, with impatience. 'Nay, that's the very thing he wants literature to do for him, man.'

'He must first fill his pub—pub—pub—basket, sir!' exclaimed the editor, with a tremendous effort. 'He must know something to begin with. He cannot set to work at once, spinning out of his own stut—stut—stut—(it's of no consequence), like a blessed spider.'

'He is going to the university very soon,' interposed the curate, who perceived that propitiation was become absolutely necessary. 'Alma Mater may not teach a great deal, but she will give him, at all events, the rudiments of education. You must allow that much, my dear fellow; even you are indebted to her for the rudiments. Your classical acquirements are more evident in your works than you may yourself imagine.'

Mr Jonathan Johnson was a man of considerable acuteness, but he had the weakness of his order—praise, nay, flattery, was sweeter to him than honey and the honey-comb. He actually persuaded himself—for the time, at least—like one who delivers himself up to hashish—that the Rev. Robert Morrit had studied his works, and was delivering his deliberate opinion on them.

'Perhaps so,' replied he, much mollified—'perhaps you are right, Morrit. I don't know any man's judgment, when disinterested and unbiased, that I respect more than I do yours. I should like much to know, now, which of my books has most met with your approbation. *Wife and Widow* is my own favourite, but many of my friends seem to prefer my *Love in a Lighthouse*. The leading journal spoke very favourably the other day of the latter volume.'

It was lucky that Mr Johnson happened to mention these efforts of genius by their titles, or the curate would have been nonplussed indeed, for he had never heard so much as the names of them before. As it was, however, he responded with much gravity, and carefully averting his eye from his nephew (who was well aware of the enormity of the tarry-diddle which the reverend gentleman was telling), that he thought that *Love in a Lighthouse* was—not to draw invidious comparisons between masterpieces—the more admirable of the two; he believed also, that that was his nephew's opinion, who was acquainted with all that had been written within the last ten years, and who, for so young a man, had a good deal of taste.

This was an ingenious device of the curate's; first, for reverting to the subject next to Frederick's heart, namely, the launch of his little skiff on the waters of Literature, which seemed in danger of being swamped by the revolution of Mr Johnson's own tremendous paddles; and secondly, to shift from his own shoulders the burden of a conversation which was by no means without its difficulties.

'My opinion is of course worth nothing,' observed the ready youth; 'but that scene in the

lighthouse in which drunken Hans prevents the lantern from revolving, and thereby wrecks the *Arethusa* steam-ship, with his own sweetheart on board, is one of the grandest incidents of dramatic retribution with which I am acquainted. In my own humble efforts of the same kind, I have often endeavoured to keep that picture before me, and I dare say am indebted to it for much which I persuade myself is my own.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed the conductor of the *Porcupine*, rubbing his hands; 'this is indeed gratifying. To earn the applause of the generation rising around him, is one of the writer's highest aims. And so you liked the *Lighthouse*, did you, my young friend?'

'Let us see some of these humble efforts of yours, Fred,' interrupted his uncle, who began to fear that the conversation would never escape from that literary Eddystone; 'let us hear a chapter out of the Carthaginian novel of real life.'

'Ah, yes, let us hear that,' observed Mr Johnson with a slight yawn, and a very manifest diminution of interest.

'Or the translation from Horace,' added the curate, 'which will possess the recommendation of greater brevity.'

'No, I won't listen to any translation,' observed the editor decisively. 'It would bore me excessively to hear Horace read aloud in the original—how much more, then, to listen to him when rendered into English!'

The curate muttered something, not so much in defence of Horace, as in depreciation of somebody's acquaintance with the Latin tongue. 'You were always a stanch mathematician, Johnson,' was, however, all that could be distinctly heard.

'I have got a Fragment here,' observed Frederick diffidently; 'a few lines which express a frequent fancy of mine—morbid enough, perhaps, and untrue, but—'

'Never cry stinking fish, young man,' interrupted the editor; 'you will find plenty of people to hold their noses at what you have to offer, without any warning from you.'

There is no position in which civilised man can possibly feel less complacent than when he undertakes to read his own effusions aloud before a literary censor. In giving readings in public, he is comparatively at ease, since by their very presence the audience tacitly confess their inferiority, and he knows that he would not return the compliment by listening to one of them on any account whatever. But when a critical individual has the right of saying: 'I don't quite follow you there'; or, 'I doubt whether that scene be not somewhat coarse'; or (heavens and earth!), 'Excuse me, but do you not think that that last chapter was just a little tedious?' I say that, under such circumstances, there is no man more to be pitied than the sucking author. Only imagine if the critical person should be drowsy, and the unhappy reader be compelled to resort to unworthy devices to recall him to a sense of his situation—such as dropping the manuscript with a great deal of noise and fluttering; inquiring with anxiety as to whether the wretch found himself quite comfortable; or even remarking with meaning: 'Be so good, Mr Critic, as to give me your *best* attention during the ensuing episode.' Can any position be more humiliating? Can self-respect be destroyed by any more appalling method? I answer: No; not at least within

the limits of probability. Although, perhaps, a parallel situation may be found in some wild effort of the imagination, such as the being appointed auctioneer while our infants are being disposed of by public roup, when the depreciatory remarks of very small bidders might perhaps produce an equal pain. A tragedian in want of an engagement, giving a private specimen of his talents before a manager—apostrophising the elements, as Lear, before an audience of one, and that one perhaps a Jew-bankrupt—must find it trying work. But then he is not uttering his own sentiments, the self-chosen language of his own heart, each carefully-coined and well-weighed word of which is dear to him.

One's proposal of marriage to some beautiful and accomplished young female, is perhaps as embarrassing; but then it is soon over. You have not to plead for a couple of hours or so, while your love makes no sign, either one way or the other, but engages herself indifferently, with a toothpick, as your critic will do. In particular, it is impossible to read one's poetry to any advantage under such circumstances. 'The chariot-wheels jar in the gate through which we drive them forth.'

Mr Frederick Galton, a young gentleman in general of much self-confidence, stammered almost as pertinaciously as Mr Jonathan Johnson in the endeavour to enunciate his Fragment.

When the doors have closed behind us, and the voices died away,
Do the singers cease their singing—do the children end their play?
Do the words of wisdom well no more through the calm lips of age?
Are the fountains dry whence the young draw hopes too bright for the faith of the sage?
And, like to the flower that clotheth up when the East begins to glow,
Doth the maiden's beauty fade from off her tender cheek and brow?
Are they all but subtle spirits, changing into those and these,
To vex us with a feigned sorrow, or to mock us while they please?
All the world a scene phantasmal, shifting aye to something strange,
Such as, if but disenchanted, one might mark in act to change;
See the disembodied beings, whom we held of our own kind,
Friend, and foe, and kin, and lover, each a help to make us blind;
Set to watch our lonely hours, ambushing about our path.
That our eyes shall ne'er be opened, till their lids be closed in death;
And when so closed, will all things be as though we had ne'er been born,
And e'en without those tears that are dried swift as the dews by the morn?
That make us feel this fancy more, so strange doth it appear
How the memory of a dead man dies with those he held most dear;
As though there was an end, with life, of the mockery that beguiles
Our every act, tricks out our woes, and cheats us of our smiles,
And makes (but feigns) to love and scorn, and parts and reconciles.

There was a painful pause, when this unsatisfactory performance was concluded.

'Well, Fred,' observed his uncle at length, 'I am very sorry, but I must confess that I do not in the least understand what your muse has been driving at. What do you say, Johnson?'

'I think I see what the young man means,' remarked the censor; 'but it is at best, as he has himself observed, a morbid fancy, born of the egotism that is inherent in the literary character.'

'How did you manage to eradicate that weakness in your own case?' inquired the curate gravely.

'It was a *kuk—kuk*—case of *der—der—der*—it was a case of discipline of the mind, sir. I was determined to overcome it, and I did.—Now, don't be discouraged, young gentleman; I myself have written several very indifferent poems. I thought myself at one time a great poetical genius. Perhaps I could really do as well as some to whom the laurel has been universally awarded. I wrote a series of ballads once in the *Westminster Volunteer*, an amateur magazine of some merit, years ago. They are very good ballads, sir, but they were not appreciated.'

'They were upon English history, were they not?' inquired Frederick languidly. 'He could no longer feign to be interested in this man's confounded writings. He felt as if his intellect had received its death-blow. Mrs Hartopp's commendation of his literary efforts had indeed always elevated him, but not without self-consciousness that that beer was small to get intoxicated upon; and the late reception of his Fragment convinced him of the worthlessness both of her approbation and of that which she approved.'

'They were upon English history, sir,' returned the editor graciously. 'I am glad you remember them. Did you yourself ever select a subject from the same source? It is better for a young man to do so; it affords a trellis-work upon which to train his luxuriant thoughts, which have rarely strength to stand of themselves. Your fancy, in particular, which is too subjective, sir, although full of promise, had better be confined for the present to some such field.'

The colour came back to the young man's cheek as he heard these words, and the embers of hope were fanned within him. 'I have a short ballad here,' murmured he, 'upon *The Death of Cromwell*.'

'I hope that it's written to the tune of the *Rogue's March*,' observed the curate.

'I trust,' said the editor, 'it contains no disrespect towards the greatest pur—pur—pur—'

'The greatest puritanical scoundrel that ever spoke through his nose,' suggested the curate.

'The greatest pur—pur—prince that ever ruled in England,' quoted Mr Johnson.

'You shall judge for yourselves,' quoth Frederick gaily, 'and I hope it may please both your worships.'

THE DEATH OF CROMWELL.

The wind was up and wild that night
On flood, and field, and fell;
Untouched by man, from each church-tower
There pealed a passing bell;
At midnight, all the land rang out
The great Protector's knell.
The walls a solemn anthem rolled;
The forests bent and brake;
The moon was hid; the stars were quenched;
The wasted earth did quake:
'Twas meet God's every work should shew
When God that soul did take.

And all men stood, like sentinels
Who hear about their posts
The ring of spear, the beat of hoof,
The clang of charging hosts;
But wist not if 'tis friend or foe,
Nor who hath won or lost.
And far beyond the tossing seas,
That tempest tore the vine,
And whirled their snows from Alps to Alps,
And levelled low the pine;
For all that dwelt in Christendom,
'Twas meet, should see the sign.
But round his rocking palace-gates,
The great Protector's guard,
The men that had no chief but one,
Still kept their watch and ward,
And prayed so loud and earnestly,
The tempest scarce was heard;
For well they knew him near to death,
Their tried and trusty friend,
Their leader in a hundred fields,
And matchless to the end,
God had not, to their iron arms
Another such to send,
Whose name was dreadful on the Earth,
And dreadful on the Main,
'Neath whose broad shield God's people couched,
Nor put their trust in vain
In him who taught Rome charity,
And bent the knee of Spain.
As, through that night, from hour to hour,
The preachers, grave and sad,
Came forth from where great Cromwell lay,
With what dark news they had,
Did each stern veteran weep to hear,
As weeps some orphan lad.
'This night is our great general's last,
A death-time fit and rare
For him who gave to God the praise,
And whom God gave the war.
This is the night of Worcester field,
Brave comrades, and Dunbar;
And lo! his thoughts are with you now,
The chosen of the Lord.
His brows are knit, his hands are clenched,
He dreams he grasps the sword.
'Let us go down to Gilgal, men,'
Was his last spoken word.
This morn he saw the sun break forth
As on that Dunbar day,
And strove to prop him on his arm,
To meet the broad bright ray;
'And let the Lord arise,' had said,
But had not strength to say;
But we spoke for him to the end;
All noontide wrestled we,
But since the tempest first was stirred,
His heart is back with ye.
And now he cries: 'They charge, they charge!'
And now: 'They flee, they flee!'
Hark! hushed is every breath of air!
Marked ye this sudden lull?
How star by star comes forth in peace
To meet the moon at full?
Great Cromwell's soul is other-where,
And other realms doth rule.
'That's de—de—devilish good, young man!' observed the editor dogmatically.

'A great deal too good for the subject,' objected the curate. 'Where the lad picks up such abominable sentiments, I am sure I cannot think.'

'Pooh! the boy's all right,' quoth Mr Jonathan Johnson: 'it is easy to see that he's in the Carlyle stage just now.'

'And where will that carry him to?' inquired Mr Morrit grimly.

'No very great distance, as I believe myself; but Percival Potts affirms, to Toryism. All distinguished persons, Potts makes out to be Tories at heart, and whatever they say that is good, he contends to have, at bottom, a Tory signification. You would get on with Percival Potts, sir, famously.'

'Umph!' grunted the curate, as though he would say he trusted to end his days with philosophy, even if he should never make the acquaintance of that gifted gentleman.

'Percival Potts,' continued the editor soliloquising, 'is one of those men who do not really care three skips of a lul-lul lamb for any principles; but finding Toryism less represented in literature than other *isms*, he adopted it, and has worked it with some success. The possession of it gives him a sort of excuse for the display of his insolence—and he is a very insolent beggar to his equals, is Percival—because it entitles him to say: "I am naturally humble; I revere my superiors; I am the last description of individual to give myself airs." If there is so much as a baronet in the room, however, Potts is always on his best behaviour; and when intoxicated, he is amusing, since in that state he never fails to favour the company with his own genealogy, the links of which he supplies as he goes on from his perfervid imagination. You must certainly meet Potts, my dear fellow.'

'He must be charming indeed,' observed Mr Morrit with gravity. 'I count the hours until I see him.—In the meantime, Fred, have you got any more manuscripts?'

'Has he got any more?' repeated the editor. 'Why, bless my soul, Morrit, he has thousands. These things are to the literary aspirant as shoots are to the sapling. They are mental ministrations—bloodlettings of nature's own, without which the patient would die of congestion of the brain. They are the favourable intellectual eruptions, which carry off goodness knows what diseases, but madness, certainly, for one. Now, have you not a chestful at home, young gentleman—a large three-storied chestful, such as linen is generally kept in? Come now, confess.'

'I have a pretty large deskful of them,' replied the young man modestly.

'Good. I will come over to-morrow morning, and overhaul them; and if there is anything worth having, you shall see it in the *Porcupine*.—And now, Morrit, let us have a second bottle to wash away this taste of literature. The honey of Hybla cloyes one's palate confoundedly, but of the bee-wing of good port wine we never tire.'

The curate left the room, to return with a sawdusty bottle, held slantingly in both his hands, like an infant, and with a tenderness at least equal to most child-carriers.

'Now, Johnson, take the screw, man,' said he; 'and be very careful not to jerk the cork out.'

Mr Jonathan Johnson acted as directed, while the Rev. Robert Morrit held the patient firmly between his knees, so that the liquor was arrived at, with the least possible shock to the system.

The London editor lay back in his easy-chair, smacking his lips at intervals as the port went down, like minute-guns at sea.

There was of course no more conversation, except upon the 'vintages,' respecting which the two full-grown gentlemen were duly wearisome, and asserted the usual falsehoods. I forbear to repeat them,

since the ignorance and contemptible ambition of mankind are never perhaps so painfully apparent as when they dilate upon this unhappy subject.

'I have not tasted such wo—wo—wine as that, Morrit, since I last dined at Minim Hall, near fourteen years ago,' said the editor solemnly, as he lit his bed-candle, after consuming three spills in the attempt.

'I dare say not; I can easily believe it,' quoth the parson, with a movement of his venerable head.

And yet that second bottle was by no means 'twenty' port, as the curate very well knew, but of a vintage much more modern, of which a considerable quantity could be still obtained of the provincial wine-merchant, without favour, and at a moderate price.

GARDENS OF THE GREEKS.

AMONG the ancient Greeks, the idea of a garden included vegetables, fruit-trees, and flowers. Towards them there had floated from the East traditions of paradises, half real, half mythical, created by sovereigns of vast wealth, which adorned the mountains of Syria and Media, and were imitated in Babylon and Egyptian Thebes, by gardens laid out on terraces, rising one above another to a great height, shaded by immense trees, and watered by reservoirs, placed at the top of the whole structure. In oriental countries, similar fictions are delighted in still; for in the gardens of Iren, in which the Arabs steadfastly believe, we have the rivals of those of the Hesperides in beauty, in fragrance, and in unsubstantiality. Among the ancient Egyptians, however, there existed real gardens, which, for extent, magnificence, and fragrance, might have vied with the fictions of poetry. We behold fragmentary representations of them still, painted on the ruined walls of their temples and sepulchral grottoes, studded with rare flowers and fruit-trees, adorned with covered walks, fountains, arbours, parterres, sculpture of grotesque forms, and seats of polished stone, where birds of the rarest plumage nestle among the branches of the trees, or float along the surface of the ponds.

At various points on the banks of the Nile, as at Siout and Er-Rashid, we yet find the descendants of those ancient gardens, which the luxuriant vegetation of spring, if left to develop itself unchecked, soon converts into romantic wildernesses. In one place, the banana throws forth its huge leaves, fourteen or fifteen feet long, and two or three broad, which descend in green and rustling folds to the ground, and are with difficulty stirred by the lazy breeze; close to it perhaps rises the pomegranate-tree, covered with blood-red blossoms; and a little beyond, the graceful pyramidal foliage of the *ramnus* lotus, or the grand masses of the sycamore, or the columnar date-palm, or thickets of mimosa; or some of those thousand nameless shrubs, blossoming and odoriferous, which delight the traveller's eye, and soothe his senses as he wanders by the pools and sheets of water, starred with myriads of white water-lilies, or with the pink and blue lotuses of Egypt.

In Greece, vegetation presents a different aspect—less tropical, but more graceful and beautiful, since even flowers of decidedly oriental origin there exhibit more brilliance and loveliness. To

poetry we are indebted for our knowledge of the gardens of remote times, which are often suspected to owe much of their splendour to the imagination, though perhaps without any reason; for when we consider the number of trees and flowers acclimated in Hellas, and asking but little care or cultivation to render them blooming and fertile, we may accept, without much abatement, the slight, though suggestive pictures which have been handed down to us by the masters of song. The houses of Greek gentlemen were generally built in the form of the letter H, the cross-bar representing the *corps de logis*, as our neighbours express it; while the sides figure the front and back wings, the former running along the breadth of a court, enclosed towards the street by a wall, the latter projecting into the garden. Here the skill of the gardener began to display itself. From wing to wing extended parterres of flowers, such as roses or stocks, or purple or white violets, interspersed with myrtle copses, and shaded here and there by quince or fig-trees. Many modern writers have doubted whether, in remoter ages, the Greeks enjoyed the perfume of the Queen of flowers, though the testimony of their oldest poets ought to be allowed to set the question at rest. Homer often distinctly and emphatically alludes to the rose, to which he compares the fingers of the Dawn while she draws aside the curtains of the east; and Stesichorus, who flourished six hundred years before the Christian era, speaks of crowns of roses. Traditions also of an early date speak of the rose-gardens of a Thracian king, which lay in sheltered spots at the foot of the snowy Bernicus. Johnson sarcastically observes, that many persons lament the loss of ancient writers who have never read a word of those that remain. He is no doubt right enough; but without exactly laying ourselves open to his censure, we may regret that the works of many authors have perished, which might have been of considerable use to us had they been preserved, especially when we happen to be engaged in the endeavour to settle some disputed point. The fragment of Stesichorus to which we have alluded has been thus translated—

Many a golden quince was there,
Piled upon the regal chair;
Many a verdant myrtle bough;
Many a rose-crown feathly wreathed
With purple violets, that grow
Where the breath of Spring has breathed.

The nations who inherited the treasures of Greek literature cannot be reproached with any very strong desire to pass down as pedants to posterity, for, instead of groping among the dust of their libraries, searching for and copying their remains, as the men of the Renaissance are laughed at for doing, they allowed their manuscripts to perish, or even destroyed them by rubbing off with pumice-stone the words of some poet, orator, or philosopher, to inscribe in their place the legend of an anchorite or unwashed nun; otherwise, we might have been aided in our investigations respecting Greek gardens by the fanciful productions of Chæremon, surnamed the Flower Poet, from his passion for the denizens of the parterre. We may infer from his fragments, and from what others have said of him, that he had formed the design of celebrating and describing in verse 'every flower that drinks the dew' between the Adriatic and Aegean. Having described in splendid lines

a group of maidens sporting by moonlight, Chæremon proceeds thus:

And slumbering near them others lay, on beds of sweetest flowers—
The dusky petalled violet, the rose of Paphian bowers,
The inula and saffron-flower, which on their garments cast,
And veils, such hues as deck the sky when day is ebbing fast;
While far and near, tall marjoram bedecked the fairy ground,
Loading with sweets the vagrant winds that frolicked all around.

Modern society can scarcely form a conception of the extent to which flowers were cultivated in Greece, not merely for the sake of their beauty when beheld in the garden, but on account of the immense use made of them in religious ceremonies, as well as in the circumstances of daily life. The lover crowned himself with flowers when he went to visit his mistress, hung garlands of flowers upon her door, and adorned with wreaths the statues of the divinities who were supposed to preside over love or marriage. Scarcely any one entered a temple uncrowned, and according to the character of the deity worshipped there, the flowers of the wreath were changed. Again, when the Athenians repaired to the theatre, which contained an audience of between twenty and thirty thousand persons, nearly every one wore a garland on his head. At private parties, likewise, when they dined or drank together, their brows were decked with flowers, while the apartments in some instances were covered so deeply with roses, that they reclined upon them as upon sofas. This taste, which prevailed more or less throughout the whole country, as well as in Magna Gracia, Sicily, and Asia Minor, may convey some idea of the extent of floral cultivation, which everywhere constituted an important branch of industry; just as the cultivation of roses still does in parts of Central Egypt, and the northern provinces of India. In these eastern countries, vast quantities of roses are needed for the manufacture of attar, the most lasting and delicate perfume ever invented by man. In the present day, the Greeks convert roses to several uses not much thought of in the West. At Athens, for example, is made a conserve of roses, imported occasionally into England, which may be reckoned among the most delicious articles of luxury that can be imagined, being equally remarkable for taste and scent, as well as for its power of stimulating digestion and promoting health.

Whoever has tasted the apples of Greece, will readily believe the extent to which they were exported from that country in antiquity. So, again, the pears, the pomegranates, the figs, and the water-melons, which cool the traveller's lips as he toils through the fiery hollows of the Morea, have always been esteemed the finest in the Levant. But what in commercial times are regarded exclusively as articles of profit, were at an earlier period of the world's history looked upon from a more poetical point of view. It was doubtless the sight of oranges, when by some Grecian wanderer they were beheld for the first time on the warm and lovely slopes of Mount Atlas, that formed the germ of the myth about the gardens of the Hesperides, and caused the trees that bore them

to be stolen from the African shores, and acclimated among the Hellenes. Even now, when the thing is of daily occurrence, the view of an orange or citron grove is one of the most beautiful that can be imagined, some of the fruit peeping through the green foliage like golden spheres; others, partly of the colour of the leaf, partly yellow; while an abundance of expanded or unfolding blossoms fill the whole atmosphere with an intoxicating fragrance. Experience proves what might otherwise be attributed to the fancy, that the soil of Attica is so sweet, that everything planted in it acquires an additional delicacy of flavour. Thus, pear-trees transplanted from Malta to the gardens of Maronsi, a village about six miles from Athens, not only produce more delicious pears, but begin to bear the very first season. If such be the case now, when gardening can hardly be said to be studied at all in the dominions of the young Danish king, what must it have been of old, when the most practised, skilful, and studious of gardeners exhausted their ingenuity in the attempt to please the palates of their fastidious countrymen.

We have said that the grounds of an Athenian gentleman were devoted partly to flowers, partly to vegetables, and partly to trees; but there was a peculiar order in the arrangement, by which what was beautiful was brought immediately under the eye, while that which merely ministered to utility was fenced off, and screened from observation by copse of *agnus castus*, or *rhododendrons*, or myrtle, or oleander, which, at the proper periods of the year, extended a blaze of blossoms between the kitchen-garden and the floral department. Among the citizens of the 'fierce democracy', something of oriental tastes and manners continued to prevail down to a very late period; the windows of the female apartments were usually turned towards the garden, so that, shaded by amber or purple hangings, they could lean on the sills of marble or carved cedar, and gaze forth in the cool of the morning upon the *bosquets* of arbutus, or the broad waves of pear, apple, and pomegranate blossoms, which led the eye towards the foot of Hymettus, the home of the Attic bee, or down to the banks of the Ilissus, shaded by plane-trees, and dotted at intervals with cupolas of white marble, which glittered like newly-carved alabaster in the sun. And here we may as well notice a trait of Athenian manners, which will be thought to reflect some credit on the enterprising and grasping Demos, as the men of Dorian blood were wont to denominate it. So little fear had gentlemen that their gardens would be plundered by the people, that footpaths often traversed their orchards, their vineyards, and their kitchen-gardens. One man's grounds were, moreover, separated from another's, not by high walls or insurmountable fences, but by rows of olive or plane trees, thirty or forty feet apart; or by loose hedges of the fragrant *phillyrea*, with frequent gaps, and banks studded with wild-flowers. It was even customary among the more opulent and noble citizens to invite the people not only to stroll at will through their grounds, but whenever they thought proper, to pluck and eat the fruit; and there is no instance on record of this liberty having been abused. It may be that the object of such generosity was to acquire popularity; but if so, it was easily gained, and harmlessly enjoyed.

A phrase, which often occurs in Greek literature,

refers to a rule invariably observed in the laying out of a garden—'You have not proceeded beyond the rue.' To understand the import of this expression, it must be observed, that when you left a Grecian house, and strolled forth into the garden, the first thing you encountered was a row of rue plants, extending right and left, to mark the beginning of the floral department. When you had passed the rue, which probably owed its place to some unexplained superstition, you found yourself in the midst of gillyflowers, pinks, carnations, beds of matted violets, thickets of roses, hillocks netted with wild-thyme, encircling clusters of the sweetest flowers, overhung by the branches of the smilax or the pomegranate-tree. Then you descended, perhaps, into a hollow, where, from a fountain such as Grecian taste alone could produce, water splashed, and fell over into marble channels, shaded here and there by plants which love the wave, such as the narcissus and the hyacinth, or by odoriferous shrubs overarching the tiny stream. Here, throughout the day, might be heard the hum of bees plunging into the chalice of the pale veronica or the white lily, or buzzing about the flower of the trinity, or the golden motherwort; while overhead, from the boughs of the platane or the cedar, the wood-lark or the thrush sung in rivalry. As evening came on, the hush of other sounds ushered in the song of the nightingale, which one of the greatest of the tragic poets often sat up all night to hear, and whose music still gushes, rich and melodious, through his verses.

When the garden stood in the city, or its environs, the objects of interest of which it commanded views were at once most striking and numerous. From one side you caught a glimpse of the Acropolis with its Olympian population in white marble, over which towered the colossal figure of the warlike Athena, whose gilded helmet and shield were visible from afar, whether you approached from the southern silver-mines, or descended through lovely valleys from the elevated chain of Cithaeron. If you looked seawards, you beheld, at the distance of a few miles, the port of Athens, joined to the city by long and towering walls, on which several chariots could drive abreast. In that port were ships from all parts of the world then known, which laid at the feet of the democracy the riches of the East and West, and carried home in return those costly fabrics and works of art in bronze, gold, ivory, or marble, which the genius of Attica poured forth with so profuse a hand that fragments of them are still found adorning and stimulating the creative powers of all states possessing the slightest claim to civilisation. A little further rose the island of Salamis, rendered famous by the destruction of the Persian fleet and host; and not many miles out at sea, the eye rested on the rock of *Ægina*, crowned by the temple of Jupiter, around which clustered a dense population, owing its existence entirely to commerce. To the right, stretched away, in a south-westerly direction, the elevated ridges of the Peloponnesus, amid whose folds nestled the ancient states of Argos and Mycena, where money was first coined, and where half the fables of the mythology took their rise. On the left, the eye followed the sinuous shore to the lofty promontory of Sunium, now Cape Colonna, from the rocky brow of which the fame of the virgin goddess looked down upon the waves.

A succession of such gardens as we have partly

described bordered the road all the way to Eleusis, and were backed by olive groves, whose thin and pale green foliage rustled almost constantly to the touch of the south or west wind. At the entrance of this road, you passed the plane-tree beneath whose dense shade the greatest of philosophers reclined side by side with the youthful Phaedrus, while reading one of the finest effusions of Lysias, which led to the superb dialogue, in grandeur far outstripping all that that renowned orator ever produced or imagined. Further in the country were gardens of a more rustic kind, enclosed for a particular purpose with high strong walls, and devoted altogether to the cultivation of flowers. Along such of those walls as faced the south ran three rows of hives, from which at early morning the bees poured forth, sometimes in clusters, sometimes in columns; the weaker or more indolent resting on the blossoms immediately beneath them, while the stronger and more enterprising rose high in the air, and spread themselves far and wide over the blooming thickets and rich clover meadows of the Cephissus. Gardens, however, were hardly judged complete without a sprinkling of vines, either trailed along the walls, or overarching the entrances, where their golden or purple clusters lay in bacchanal profusion, courting the embraces of the sun. Some of the flower-planters of Hellas, where everything was carried to extremes, ran almost mad on the subject of bees, to enjoy whose company several individuals devoted themselves to a life of solitude in wild and remote places, which their industry clothed with roses and violeta. Here, through hives of speculae stone, they studied the movements and government of the political insects, who, under a female monarch, enjoy all the advantages of a commonwealth. One of these men, who passed fifty-eight years after this fashion, carefully chronicled his observations, which may have assisted Aristotle in the composition of his natural history. To such persons, in part at least, were owing those remarks on weather and the winds which, collected and condensed into a body, constituted the rural philosophy of Greece. Seated in fragrant boweries, they watched the coming on of dawn, the heliacal rising or setting of certain stars, the phenomena of meteors, the generation and office of dews, the habits and migrations of birds, with whatever else concerned their interests or occupations. Even the highest intellects shared with the humblest this rapt contemplation of external nature; though Socrates, whose pleasantries were sometimes misunderstood, suggested a different idea of himself, by saying that he could learn nothing from stones and trees. In truth, however, he had learned much, and was familiar with the topography of his country long before the battle of Delium. At any rate, no people except the English have ever been fonder than the Athenians of rural life. There they often passed the happiest portion of their lives, in those tasteful and elegant mansions, surrounded by beautiful gardens, which, when their country had the calamity to be invaded, always first provoked the enemy's devastating hand.

As a people, the Greeks may truly be said to have idolised the country, whence their literature is full of rustic imagery, of the sighing of trees in the wind, of the rush and splashing of the sea on the beach, of the trickling of fountains, of the chirp of grasshoppers in the sun,

of the cooing of doves, of the 'pleasaunce, of the breathing fields,' of the hum of bees, of the bark of dogs, of the lowing of kine, of the neighing of the war-horse as he bounds and plunges over stream and chasm; and nowhere was the face of the earth more adorned and beautified by man's hand. Cultivation scaled the highest mountains, and marked its track by delicate white chapels to the rural gods, by noble temples, by altars under ancient trees, by enshrining secluded springs in marble, and extending to them, through beneficent superstition, the protection of heaven; for fountains were esteemed sacred, because they ministered to one of the primary wants of man. When the Greek was shut up hopelessly in a city, he created on his window ledge a garden for himself, either, if rich, in a silver basket, sculptured all over with rustic imagery; or, if poor, in one of wood or osier, where he fostered and allured into bloom the denizens of the distant mountains and valleys.

DONATIS COMET.

EARTH saw amazed a trail of light
That scarred with fire the front of Night—
A mighty sign, to which in heaven
Dominion for a space was given.

A legacy from Day to Night,
Fast broadening in the fading light,
That flaming falchion in the skies,
Was portent strange to human eyes.

As though the parting sun tossed back
A plume of fire upon his track,
Across the threshold of the Day,
The swift pursuit of Night to stay.

The startled heavens, night by night,
Saw their strange tyrant blaze more bright,
And widening still, triumphant sway,
Soar higher towards the Milky-way.

The constellations shrank aghast
From the swift phantom driving past,
And Midnight saw the fiery mark
Emblazoned on its outraged dark.

Till in its train, curved wide and far,
It swept enmeshed a captive star;
And veiled in gossamer of light,
Ensnared Arcturus glittered bright.

Then lo! 'twas smitten in its might—
O'erthrown, and shorn of half its light;
And to the gazing earth 'twas given
To see the sign reversed in heaven.

Down-stricken, reeling from its place
Amid the stars, hurled back through space,
It sank, and waned, with shrinking crest,
Till sunset drowned it in the west.

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